



SS. PETER & PAUL UKRAINIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Today we have arrived at the Eve of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and we pray that each and every member of our parish community and our families will have a blessed and joyous celebration of Christmas and a blessed and happy New Year! As we gather together with friends and family this Christmas let us all give thanks that truly God is with us and has blessed us all with many blessings and especially the Nativity of our Lord and Savior!

As we celebrate this festal season let us all join together as a parish community in the liturgical celebrations of this joyous season. Let us join together as we celebrate this time in prayer and worship with the various services given to us by our Holy Church as a useful and beneficial celebration of God having come down and dwelt among His people.

DECEMBER 17TH 2023

Sunday, December 24 Sunday before Nativity

Epistle Reading: Heb 11:9-10, 17-23.32-40
Gospel Reading: Matt 1:1-25
Confession – 9:15, Hours-9:45
Divine Liturgy – 10:00

Sunday, December 24, 2021

Holly Supper
Great Compline (Nativity)
7:00 pm

Monday, December 25, 2021 The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

Epistle Reading: Gal 4:4-7;
Gospel Reading: Matt 2:1-12
Divine Liturgy - 10:00

Sunday, December 31 Leave of Nativity

Epistle Reading: 2 Tim 4:5-8
Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1-8
Confession – 9:15, Hours-9:45
Divine Liturgy – 10:00

Monday, January 1, 2022 Circumcision of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Epistle Reading: Col 2:8-12; Gospel
Reading: Luke 2:20-21, 40-52
Divine Liturgy –9:30

CONTACT

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SAINTS PETER AND PAUL UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX PARISH

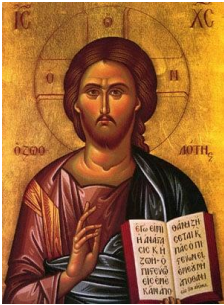
GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READING

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 4:4-7



BRETHREN, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir of God through Christ.

The Gospel According to Matthew 2:1-12



When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him,

"In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

All the citizens and residents of Ukraine, Stanley Ostwinch, Julia Walek, pani matka Lilia, Jean Markiw, Patrick, Debbie, Wesly, Cindy, Christine, Denny Zymboly, Ruth Dally, Philip, Eric, Greg, Carl, Kayden, Rose, Dorothy Cygan, Helen, Fr. Vasyl, Mary-Ann, Payton, Anthony, Tina, Mykola, Stella, Maksymko, Fr. Yurii, Maria, Fr. Jakiw, Fr. George, Volodymyr, Alexandr, Vincent.

PARISH NEWS AND UPDATES

This morning we offer a word of thanks to **Lydia Rudolf and Adriane Hassler** with their families for the wonderful and enjoyable Saint Nicholas Day Program we all enjoyed this time of the year. Thank you also everyone who helped with the set up for the delicious Potluck luncheon and to Saint Nicholas for his wonderful visit.

We offer a word of thanks to **Maria Corbin and Lydia Rudolf** for purchasing a Manger that now decorates outside of our Church right in front of the Cross. It reminds each of us about the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ each time we look at it and remember the story of coming of Lord in the Flesh.

As we draw closer to the celebration of Christmas, we have an opportunity to make special donation to sponsor the **Poinsettias** that will soon decorate our Church. These donations can be made in honor or in memory of a family member or friend. We encourage everyone to please participate in this and make your donations by Sunday, December 24th by using your offering envelope and marking other as "Christmas Flower Donation".

Next week, on Sunday, December 24th, after Divine Liturgy, Fr. Yurii are going to bless Prosporhas baked by him to be used on Holly Supper before the Nativity feast day! Please, leave a small gift for this purpose!

We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who came up to help with our Pirohi Sale last week! We would like to invite and encourage everyone to come out to help with the next Parish Pirohi Sale on **December 22th**! Please, come and help as we work together once again for the good of our Parish in this special way.

Today we wish to announce that the Parish calendars for the coming new year of 2023, are available on back pew of the Church. We offer a word of appreciation and thanks to Geibels Funeral Home for their continued and generous sponsorship and donation of our calendars!

I ask for your continued prayers for the Archbishop's rapid return to full and good health and he expressed to me how much those prayers benefitted him many times before, enabling him to very quickly resume all normal activity in service to our Lord and to all of you. My dear Brother in our Lord's Vineyard, Archbishop Daniel, is a blessing to us all. He works tirelessly for our spiritual well-being and through the efforts of our Church, our faithful and hundreds of friends and neighbors of our Church, he has managed millions of dollars of Christian aid, ensuring that it reached the people most in need throughout Ukraine.

Please join me in offering your fervent prayers for a quick recovery of Vladyka Daniel. May our God bless and keep you all in the best of spiritual, physical and emotional life.

In our Lord's All-Encompassing Love, + **ANTONY By the Grace of God, Metropolitan.**

The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ



The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea; the latter was an Ascalonite on his father's side and an Idumean on his mother's. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; rather, he had received his authority from the Roman emperors, and had ruled tyrannically over the Jewish people for some thirty-three years. The tribe of Judah, which had reigned of old, was deprived of its rights and stripped of all rule and authority. Such was the condition of the Jews when the awaited Messiah was born, and truly thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the Patriarch Jacob had spoken 1,807 years before: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of the nations" (Gen.49:10).

Thus, our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, whither Joseph had come from Nazareth of Galilee, taking Mary his betrothed, who was great with child, that, according to the decree issued in those days by the Emperor Augustus, they might be registered in the census of those subject to Rome. Therefore, when the time came for the Virgin to give birth, and since because of the great multitude there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstance constrained them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as shelter a stable of irrational beasts, she gave birth there, and swaddled the Infant and laid Him in the manger (Luke 2:1-7). From this, the tradition has come down to us that when Christ was born He lay between two animals, an ox and an ass, that the words of the Prophets might be fulfilled: "Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abbacum 3:2), and "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib" (Esaias 1: 3).

But while the earth gave the new-born Saviour such a humble reception, Heaven on high celebrated majestically His world-saving coming. A wondrous star, shining with uncommon brightness and following a strange course, led Magi from the East to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King. Certain shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem, who kept watch while tending their sheep, were suddenly surrounded by an extraordinary light, and they saw before them an Angel who proclaimed to them the good tidings of the Lord's joyous Nativity. And straightway,

together with this Angel, they beheld and heard a whole host of the Heavenly Powers praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" (Luke 2:8-14).

Tropar of Holy Nativity, Fourth Tone

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; for thereby they that worshipped the stars were instructed by a star to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion of Holy Nativity, Third Tone

Today, the Virgin bears Him who is transcendent, and the earth presents the cave to Him who is beyond reach. Angels, along with shepherds glorify Him. The Magi make their way to Him by a star. For a new child has been born for us, the God before all ages.

“... We pray for peace and that there will never be another war!!!” - The Prayers of Ukrainian Children Touch the Ministry of the UOC of the USA



The war in Ukraine has triggered the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. As a result, millions of people, especially children from Ukraine will be spending this year's Nativity of Christ season far from home, familiarity and loved ones.

The ongoing war in Ukraine continues to severely impact people's lives, damage critical civilian infrastructure and livelihoods, and trigger mandatory evacuations of civilians from front-line communities and driving high humanitarian needs. Deadly attacks with humanitarian consequences have continued across Ukraine since the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation in February 2022. According to the data of the United Nations, over 28,350 civilian casualties have been verified as of October 2023, and this number is likely to be considerably higher. On 5 October, a missile attack against a funeral reception in Hroza, Kharkiv Oblast, killed 59 civilians. The attack was the deadliest in 2023 in terms of civilian casualties. Also, the deteriorating security situation and heightened risks in the areas near Kupiansk City and in front-line areas of eastern Donetska, southern Khersonska and south-eastern Zaporizka oblasts triggered mandatory evacuations of children with families. As of September, 3.7 million people are internally displaced. Attacks on Black Sea ports and grain storage facilities continue and add another burden on farmers already struggling with heavy land mine contamination, particularly in Ukraine's breadbasket regions, including Kharkivska, Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts.

With winter's arrival and temperatures plummeting below zero, attacks on energy infrastructure, water and gas systems could further aggravate the situation, particularly near the front line. Since the beginning of 2023, attacks have continued to damage homes and energy facilities. People most affected by the war could face a tough winter and be forced to make difficult choices such as between warmth and other services. The UN and its partners estimate that 1.7 million people will need winter assistance, particularly in front-line oblasts, through March 2024.

Provision of such assistance is ongoing, and over 360,000 people received winter support as of October.



Education facilities are severely damaged, disrupting the education of children, including those who faced displacement and evacuation from front-line areas. From February 2022 to October 2023, nearly 3,800 Ukrainian educational institutions have been damaged or destroyed, severely impacting education in front-line oblasts like Donetska, Kharkivska, Khersonska, Luhanska and Zaporizka. This disruption has affected over 5 million children, with only about 30 per cent attending schools, and most displaced children, including those in front-line areas, are schooled through online or combined learning.

Over 1,300 attacks on health care have been reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), making access to health services extremely challenging in areas close to the front line, leaving millions with invisible scars, trauma and health-related issues. WHO noted that over 50 per cent of global health-care attacks from February 2022 to October 2023 occurred in Ukraine, severely limiting access to medical services in the most affected areas. The situation is most critical near the front line, with people struggling for adequate medical care. The full-scale war has escalated health needs, including emergency, trauma and mental health services, and could worsen this winter due to ongoing attacks. Nearly 10 million people, particularly children and people with disabilities, are at risk of acute stress and other mental health conditions.

Namely in these areas of destruction, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA continues to provide daily logistical and nutritional assistance.

With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Prime Hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and the Diaspora, Archbishop Daniel has actively been coordinating aid to Ukraine thanks to the generous donations of the faithful of the Church. With the help of the clergy and volunteers of the Donetsk Eparchy of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, daily shipments and distributions of food, medicine and supplies have been conducted by Very Rev. Fr. Kostyantyn Kuznetson, his wife Natalia and a group of volunteers under the spiritual leadership of His Eminence Metropolitan Serhiy of Donetsk.

In his note to Archbishop Daniel, Fr. Kostyantyn recently wrote: “...the town of Kostyantynivka is located on one side 20 km from the city of Bakhmut, 10 km away from Chasy Yaru, and on the other side 10 km from Toretsk. Despite the night bombings, our volunteers continue to bring light to people! Every day, people from the local communities come to our center for help: displaced people, pregnant women, large families, single mothers, beggars, disabled people, pensioners, and those who have lost their jobs. Our Eleos-Kostyantynivka social service team, despite daily arrivals, does everything to make life a little easier for those in need!”





Recently, the humanitarian aid was delivered to the residents of the de-occupied villages of the Lyman community. One of the volunteers, sent a note to the Office of the Consistory of the UOC of the USA: "...all along the road, explosions were heard, as much as it is scary, it is also a reason to rejoice, because there are our boys and girls who defend our holy, long-suffering Ukraine and for whom we pray every day! But, unfortunately, we also hear the arrival of bombs; we are so used to that sound and the noise alarm signals..."

Packages with high-quality products and hygiene products were brought to the needy. Almost every day, Fr. Kostyantyn and Dobrodiyka Natalia drive around the cities and villages of the Donetsk region.

Sending a note of encouragement back to the volunteers of the war zone in Ukraine, Vladyka Daniel quickly posted: "...despite the daily shelling and airstrikes, as a Church we continue our common mission of mercy, helping all those in need. Our goal is to work for the preservation of the human life - people and victory for the nation of Ukraine!"

And then there are moments of hope... Regardless of the ongoing destruction of war, the children of Ukraine share in the spirit of Christmas season - in the celebration of the life of St. Nicholas. Toys, candies and joy were delivered by the charitable ministry of the UOC of the USA to the youngest victims of this horrific tragedy of the 21st century. The children of the war-torn region of Ukraine live in the conditions of war, hear the sounds of alarms and daily bombings. They had to grow up early, they had to learn the sense of daily fear for themselves and their parents, many of whom defend Ukraine in the ranks of the Armed Forces, and some children have parents who have already made their ultimate sacrifice. As the Church, we want to console these children, give them momentary reasons for joy, smile, return them to their carefree childhood. To the question of what they dream about, the answer and desire of all is one - "... we pray for peace and that there will never be another war!!!"

Once again, Fr. Kostyantyn sends another message: "...we work every day despite the fatigue, there are many people and everyone has their own life story. Some lost their home, and others the most valuable - the life of a loved one... Infinite thanks to everyone who joined this holiday and gave emotions of happiness to our people, but especially the children, because as we know, there are no other people's children - they are ours! Because of your donations, and the help of other volunteers and generous people, we continue to issue packages with quality products and hygiene. We bring light, goodness and mercy..."



May the Lord hear the prayers and petitions of the young, and the young at heart, and grant victory to Ukraine and peace for the nation for generations to come. May the children live in a free Ukraine, where they can also enjoy the twinkling lights of Christmas and in wonder gaze up at the Christmas star and await the miracles of the season.